



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

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EMBARGOED UNTIL 11:00 a.m.

14th Annual Labor Day Report, Investing in Montana's Economic Future

(HELENA) --- Labor and Industry Commissioner Keith Kelly, Chief Economist Brad Eldredge and Economist Tyler Turner today presented the 2007 Labor Day Report to Governor Brian Schweitzer, the State Workforce Investment Board, labor officials, business and tribal leaders, key members of the Schweitzer administration, and the citizens of Montana.

"Montana is on the move," said Kelly when discussing Montana's record low levels of unemployment. "Wages continue to grow, helping to improve the take home pay for workers in Montana."

The average annual wage per job increased by 5.0 percent in Montana, which ranked 11th nationally in 2006. **In one year Montana has experienced growth in wages from \$29,155 to \$30,606, the largest increase in ten years.**

"The right conditions for sustained economic growth exist in Montana today," said Turner. "However, the state must invest in attracting and retaining workers if it wishes to continue expanding."

The number of jobs grew by 3.1 percent between 2005 and 2006; the 8th highest level of growth in the nation. This growth is largely attributed to the high wage industries of mining, finance, construction and professional services.

"Record low unemployment and rising wages are great signs that Montana is on the move, but it also presents a challenge for filling the pipeline with skilled and available workers," said Governor Schweitzer. "By removing obstacles for those not currently in the workforce, improving their employability and providing opportunities for career advancement we invest in Montana's citizens and invest in Montana's economic future."

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Copies of the Labor Day Report 2007 are available at www.ourfactsyourfuture.org or by calling the Research and Analysis Bureau toll free at 1-800-541-3904.